

The Literary Almanac. J. P. Edwards, Ludgate-hill. 1857.

A good intention, which will doubtless be better carried out next year. The list of publications, showing their circulation, is erroneous, and only calculated to mislead. It would seem to be founded on the Stamp-office returns: in our case, and that of others given, only a very small portion of the issue is stamped for post, and the statement, therefore, is altogether wrong.

Miscellaneous

THE RENT GUARANTEE SOCIETY.—The first ordinary general meeting of this society was held at the offices in Charlotte-row, Mansion-house, when the first annual report of the directors was read, from which it appeared that very favourable progress had been made, the income already clearing the expenses, with a prospect of a very extensive business in rents, tithes, &c. In only two cases, it was stated, had law proceedings to be resorted to,—one in which gross dishonesty had been shown on the part of a tenant, and the other at the special request of a landlord himself. Proposals of upwards of 46,000*l.* annual income (representing nearly a million of property) had been submitted for collection or assurance. Only 3,237 out of 10,000 shares had hitherto been issued, but it was now proposed to increase the issue to parties likely to promote the interests of the society. The report was unanimously adopted, and interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum on the paid-up capital was ordered to be paid to the shareholders.

CHARACOL IRON.—A Belgian professes to produce iron by the use of charcoal as fuel, at a price 25 per cent. under what it can be supplied for at present in this country. The superiority of iron smelted by charcoal over that obtained by the use of any other fuel is well known, and for the manufacture of steel such iron is peculiarly adapted. The inventor of this peculiar process is confident that it will prove of immense importance to the British Empire, and particularly to the railway interest,—iron so manufactured being more lasting than the ordinary kind, and less liable to oxidation.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.—An earth-slip lately occurred on the Great Northern works, at the deepest part of a cutting near the bridge at Spittle-gate-hill foot, Lincolnshire. It was reported that 1,000 tons of earth had fallen.

—In the Bankruptcy Court was lately heard the rule to show cause why Mr. Charles Blatchley, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and resident engineer of the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton Railway, at Mickleton Tunnel (Chipping-Camden), should not be committed for contempt of Court, in rescuing from Mr. Hamber, the messenger, certain plant, engines, cart horses, &c., the property of William Williams and Richard Mudge Marchant, the contractors for the tunnel, who had failed for between 50,000*l.* and 100,000*l.* It may be recollected that differences existed between the contractors and the company, and that the local magistrates interfered in the disturbances, and read the Riot Act to above 2,000 "navvies." The matters in dispute were then referred; but it was alleged that the company would not suffer the bankrupts to complete the contract, and a bankruptcy took place. Mr. Hamber seized the plant and stock on Nov. 29, at one o'clock in the morning. The servants of the company consulted with Messrs. Burchell and Parsons (their solicitors) and Mr. Brunel, who instructed them to retake possession, and they accordingly did so by force on Dec. 1, and set the labourers to work. The judge (Mr. Com. Goulburn) discharged the rule, and was of opinion, if any person had been guilty of contumacious conduct, it was Mr. Brunel, who had given very bad advice to his subordinate officer (Mr. Blatchley) in telling him not to apply to the Court.

GRUNDY'S WINTER EXHIBITION.—Mr. Grundy has again made a very interesting collection of water-colour drawings and sketches in oils, at his rooms in Regent-street, to which we invite our readers to pay an early visit.

ELECTRO-TELEGRAPHIC PROGRESS.—The British Electric Telegraph Company have commenced laying down their system of telegraphic communication, uniting Liverpool and Manchester, and the Yorkshire towns of Halifax, Bradford, Huddersfield, and Leeds, with Bartlepool, Stockton, Hull, and other north-eastern ports. The Magnetic Telegraph Company are said to have laid down their wires between Liverpool and Manchester (taking the line of the London and North-Western Railway, whilst the other new company go by the Lancashire and Yorkshire railway route, taking Bolton and Wigan on their way), and are supposed to be nearly ready for business. The latter company carry their wires under ground, whilst the British Electric Telegraph Company will have them above ground, something like the wires of the old company. Meanwhile, so far as the public are concerned, the advantages of competition are already felt in the reduction of terms by the old company, who some time since lowered their prices nearly one-half, charging for 20 words between Liverpool (or Manchester) and London 5*s.* instead of 8*s.* 6*d.* Between Liverpool and Manchester they have reduced their charges still more materially, conveying messages of 20 words now for a shilling instead of half-a-crown, as formerly. The distance from Manchester to Liverpool is over 30 miles. The old company therefore, as we warned them, have already been compelled to come to our suggested terms, after attempting to write us down as unreasonable in requiring what in this country they unflinchingly alleged to be impracticable. Better for them had they at once taken the advice which we gave, and which our daily contemporaries promulgated and enforced by their potent influence: all necessity and opening for new companies to share their business and their profits would have thus been timeously obviated. The public, however, have no reason to regret their blindness.—The Magnetic telegraph is being brought into use amongst the northern collieries.

LONDON BRANCH SCHOOL OF DESIGN.—Mr. Hammersley, of the School of Design, Manchester, gave an instructive lecture, on 2nd instant, in the New Town Hall, London, on the "Fine Arts, especially as relating to the Staple Trade of the District." The lecturer, bespeaking the indulgence of the audience, gave a short history of his own rise, progress, and present position, as an encouragement to the younger portion of his hearers to study art upon right principles, with a view of cultivating a correct taste, and elevating the staple trade, which admits of great improvement in design and decoration. He then glanced at the state of the fine arts, as connected with manufactures on the continent of Europe, and gave an account of the School of Design at Lyons, which is conducted upon a large scale, having about eleven professors, who deliver lectures, and is supported by a local rate of a halfpenny in the pound on the rental. He strongly advocated the justice and advantage of a similar impost in the manufacturing districts of this country.

THE MARYLEBONE LITERARY INSTITUTION.—Mr. Thackeray has given four of his six lectures, on writers of the last century, including Swift, Congreve, Steele, Addison, Prior, Gay, and Pope. In the third lecture on the 19th, he sketched humourously the manners of society in the time of Addison and genial "Dick Steele." On the 26th he will speak of Hogarth, and Smollett, and Fielding.

LIVERPOOL ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—The fortnightly meeting of this society was held on Wednesday 14th, Mr. H. P. Horner in the chair. Mr. William Brown, M.P. for the county, attended, and exhibited an ingenious stock lock of his own invention: the idea of its construction he had taken from the letter padlock. A lock of this description Mr. Brown had made twenty-five years ago, and it had been in use ever since, in Brown, Shipley, and Co.'s safe. The lock is constructed on a system of letters, admits of 330,090 changes, and is applicable to every purpose. Mr. Francis Horner read the paper for the evening, on the associations of taste.

ELECTRO-MAGNETIC MOTIVE POWER.—This power, it is said, is being tried in locomotives on the Paris and Lyons railway, and is reported to be quite successful even on the steepest gradient of the line. The smoothness of the wheels on the rail is said to have offered no hindrance to locomotion, as it was feared it would.—In a patent taken out in England by Mr. J. J. Greenough for the inventor, Professor Page, of New York, has adopted the principle of hollow electro-magnetic coils, using a number of them in juxtaposition; they are formed of square copper wire, wound round a mandril, which when withdrawn forms a cylinder made up of sections, with about 1,500 yards of wire to each. They are all connected metallically, but are so arranged with the cut-off, or slide, that but three coils are charged at once, and one coil is being continually cut off behind the piston, as the current is applied to a fresh one in front, is the direction in which the piston is moving. This is the peculiar feature of the engine: it is a continuous electro-magnetic draught, aided by the secondary current pulling in the same direction. The magnet is a round mass of iron, placed free to move in the centre of the coils, and forming the piston.

DRAINAGE OF HAARLEM LAKE.—The drainage of the lake, begun in 1846, is likely, it is feared, to be delayed two or three years more, before the 50,000 acres covered can be laid bare. The engines have not been proof against accidents arising from the severe work they have had to perform. The boilers are leaky and out of order, and have been sent to Amsterdam for repairs, while several portions of the machinery have become unfit for service, and will have to be replaced. A storm has recently caused considerable injury to some of the dams, and great exertions were required to prevent the breaking in of the sea, and the consequent destruction of the labour of three or four years.

GAZWORKS.—In the United Kingdom, says a contemporary, 855 cities and towns are supplied with gas. Twenty gasworks belong to municipal corporations, or commissioners, and thirty-three to private individuals. 151 companies possess Parliamentary powers, while 682 carry on their business without such powers (?). The capital invested is 12,300,000*l.*, and the quantity of gas annually manufactured exceeds twelve thousand millions of cubic feet.

VALUE OF LONDON SOOT.—In *London Labour and the London Poor*, we find the following statistics as to metropolitan soot:—

	Bushels of Soot per Annum.
53,840 houses, at a yearly rental above 50 <i>l.</i> , producing six bushels of soot each per annum	323,040
90,002 houses, at a yearly rental above 30 <i>l.</i> and below 50 <i>l.</i> , producing five bushels of soot each per annum	450,010
163,880 houses, at a yearly rental below 30 <i>l.</i> , producing two bushels of soot each per annum	327,760

Total number of bushels of soot annually produced throughout London

The price of soot per bushel is but 5*d.* and sometimes 4*d.*, but 5*d.* may be taken as an average. Now, 1,000,000 bushels of soot, at 5*d.*, will be found to yield 20,833*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per annum.

BODY FOUND AT THE HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT.—Our readers will have observed by the daily papers that a body has been found in St. Stephen's Chapel,—not, however, imbedded in the wall behind the high altar, as stated, but under the eill of a window in the wall on the north side of the altar. The walls forming part of the chapel built about 1398, it has been thought that the body was that of an abbot who died about the same time. We have every reason to believe, however, that it was of subsequent date, probably the end of the fifteenth century. Whether the body be entire, as has been stated, is not yet known, as it is enclosed in a sack fitting the shape, and probably sewn up behind. The arms are crossed, or at least the bones appear to have been so, and a floriated crook was found beside the remains.